

# LOOKING FOR ONE THING AND FINDING ANOTHER

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A SERMON  
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*“And the asses of Kish Saul’s father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses....And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them: for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?”*  
*1 Samuel 9:3, 20*

SAUL went out to seek his father’s asses, he failed in the search, but he found a crown. He met with the prophet Samuel, who anointed him king over God’s people, Israel, and this was far better than finding the obstinate colts. Let us consider this singular incident, perhaps, though it treats of asses, it may yield us some royal thoughts.

**I.** Our first remark shall be—OBSERVE HOW THE HAND OF GOD’S PROVIDENCE CAUSES LITTLE THINGS TO LEAD ON TO GREAT MATTERS.

This man Saul must be placed in the way of the prophet Samuel. How shall a meeting be brought about? Poor beasts of burden shall be the intermediate means. The asses go astray, and Saul’s father bids him take a servant, and go to seek them. In the course of their wanderings, the animals might have gone North, South, East, or West, for who shall account for the wild will of runaway asses? But so it happened, as men say, that they strayed, or were thought to have strayed, in such a direction that, by and by, Saul found himself near to Ramah, where Samuel, the prophet, was ready to anoint him. On how small an incident the greatest results may hinge! The pivots of history are microscopic.

Hence, it is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of providence as the most startling events. He who counts the stars has also numbered the hairs of our heads. Our lives and deaths are predestined, but so also are our down-sitting and our up-rising. Had we but sufficiently powerful perceptive faculties, we should see God’s hand as clearly in each stone of our pathway as in the revolutions of the earth.

In watching our own lives, we may plainly see that on many occasions, the merest grain has turned the scale. Whereas there seemed to be but a hair’s breadth between one course of action and another, yet that hair’s breadth has sufficed to direct the current of our life. “He,” says Flavel, “who will observe providences shall never be long without a providence to observe.”

Providence may be seen as the finger of God, not merely in those events which shake nations, and are duly emblazoned on the pages of history, but in little incidents of common life, ay, in the motion of a grain of dust, the trembling of a dewdrop, the flight of a swallow, or the leaping of a fish.

**II.** But that is not the consideration to which we now invite you. Our drift is this—as Saul went out to find asses, but found a crown, so, IN THE MATTER OF GRACE, MANY A MAN HAS RECEIVED WHAT HE LOOKED NOT FOR.

That is a remarkable text in Isaiah, “I am found of them that sought me not.” *Sometimes the sovereign grace of God is pleased to light on persons who had no thought about it, who were, to all appearance, quite unprepared for it, nay, even opposed to its divine operations. These persons have stumbled on the treasure hid in the field when they were only thinking of their plough, they have met Jesus at the well when they only purposed to fill their water pots, they have heard glad tidings of the Savior when they were only caring for their flocks.*

On ground not furrowed the rain of heaven has fallen, grace has come unasked. We have emblems of this in the Scriptures, in the miracles which were wrought by our Lord and His apostles. There was a young man dead, carried out to be buried, and around his bier were his weeping mother and relatives. Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, was entering in at the gate of the city, but we do not read that any of the mourners sought a miracle at His hands. They had not the faith to expect that He would raise the dead. The young man, being dead, was far beyond the possibility of seeking help for himself from the miracle-working hand of Jesus. But Jesus interposed, and commanded the bearers to stand still, they did so, and then, unsought and unasked, Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," and he arose to be delivered to his mother.

Many a young man has been in like plight, he has been dead in trespasses and sins, Christ's interposition has not been sought by him, he has not trembled at his low position, he has not even understood it, being utterly dead, and therefore insensible of his ruined state. The Redeemer has sovereignly interposed, the Holy Spirit has poured light into the darkened conscience, the man has received grace, and has lived a new and spiritual life, a life for which he had never sought.

Of a like character was the miracle of casting out devils from the two demoniacs among the Gergesenes, in which case the unhappy men were moved by the evil spirits to adjure the Savior to let them alone. Such also were the miracles of restoring the man with the withered hand, the feeding of the multitudes, and the healing of the ear of Malchus. Here, swift-footed mercy out ran the cry of misery.

Take another case from apostolic times. A poor beggar, extremely lame, hobbled one morning up to the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and there took his daily place, and began his incessant cry for a little charitable aid for a poor paralyzed man. Peter and John came up to the temple to pray. He looked upon them doubtless, but it never entered into his heart to ask them to heal him. He asked for alms. Drop a few Roman pennies into his palm, and he would be contented with the gift. But Peter and John gave to him what he had not sought for. They bade him, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk, and up he leaped, delivered from his infirmity, without having expected such a deliverance.

These emblems can be interpreted by kindred facts of grace. Christ has often met with individuals and saved them when they have not been seeking Him. Matthew was not seeking Jesus when the Lord bade him leave the table at which he was receiving custom and follow Him. The case of Zacchaeus was similar, he came in the way of Christ's preaching, but his motive was purely one of curiosity, "he sought to see Jesus, who he was." He was curious to know what kind of a man this was who had set all Judaea on a stir. Who was this that made Herod tremble, was reputed to have raised the dead, and was known to have healed all manner of diseases?

Zacchaeus, the rich publican, is a lover of sights, and he must see Jesus. But there is a difficulty—he is too short, he cannot look over the heads of the crowd. Yonder is a sycamore tree, and he will for once imitate the boys and climb. Mark how carefully he conceals himself among the thick branches, for he would not have his rich neighbors discover him in such a position. But Christ's eye detected the little man, and standing beneath that tree, unasked, unsought, unexpected, Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house," and soon, these gracious words were spoken by Christ, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Deeds of grace have been wrought in this Tabernacle after the same fashion. Men and women have come hither out of curiosity—a curiosity created by some unfounded story, or malicious slander of prejudiced minds, and yet Jesus Christ has called them, and they have become both *His* disciples and *our* warm-hearted friends. Some of the most unlikely recruits have been our most valuable soldiers. They began with aversion, and ended with enthusiasm. They came to scoff, but remained to pray. These seats could tell many an incident of the "romance of grace" more wonderful than the marvels of fiction.

No, brethren, such is the surprising grace of God, that He has not only been pleased to save men who did not expect it, but *He has even condescended to interpose for the salvation of men who were fighting against His grace, and violently opposing His cause.*

Read yon story which will never lose its charm, of which the hero is one Saul of Tarsus. What a singular subject for converting grace! He had resolved to hound the saints to death. He would exterminate them if he could. His blood boiled against the followers of Jesus, he could not speak of them calmly, he was mad with rage. Hear him rave at them! "What? Will these men oppose the traditions of the fathers and of the Pharisees? If they are allowed to multiply, there will be no respect paid to our holy men or their weighty sentences!" He will persecute them out of existence, not in Jerusalem alone, but in Damascus.

Yet, in a few days, this hater of the Gospel was touched by the Gospel's power, and never did Christendom gain a braver champion. Nothing could dampen his fervor or quench his zeal, persecuted, beaten with rods, ship wrecked thrice—nothing could stop him from serving his Lord. What a complete reversing of the engine, and yet it was going at express speed! When he was most at enmity against Christ, then was his turning point. As though some strong hand had suddenly seized by the bridle a horse that had broken loose, and was about to leap down a precipice, and had thrown it back on its haunches, and delivered it at the last moment from the destruction on which it was impetuously rushing, so Christ interposed, and saved the rebel of Tarsus from being his own destroyer.

Another case arrives before us most vividly, it is that of the jailor at Philippi. He did not look like seeking the Savior, and being converted. He received Paul and Silas, and made their feet fast in the stocks—a piece of superfluous brutality, they could not have escaped from the inner prison, and it was needless to lay them by the heels. No doubt he wished to please his masters, and felt a contempt for the apostles.

The jailors in those days had usually been soldiers, and camp life amongst the Romans was rough indeed, his nature evidently furnished very flinty soil for the Gospel to grow in. But an earthquake comes, the prison quakes, it is a mysterious earthquake, for the prison doors are lifted from their hinges, and the prisoners' fetters are unbound, the jailor trembles, and to make short work of the story, he believes in Jesus, he is baptized, with all his believing household, he invites the apostles to his table, entertains them, and becomes one of the first members of the church of God at Philippi.

What cannot the Gospel do when it comes in its power? And where may it not come? May it not, at this moment, visit another prison, and save another jailor, though his thoughts are far otherwise?

We have ourselves met with similar cases. Many old stories are current which we do not doubt are true. There is one of a man who never would attend a place of worship until he was induced to go to hear the singing. He would listen to the tunes, he said, but he would have "none of your canting preaching"—he would put his fingers in his ears. He takes that wicked precaution, and effectually blocks up Ear-gate for a while, but the gate is stormed by a little adversary, for a fly settles on his nose, he must brush it off, and as he takes out his finger to do so, the preacher says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The man listens, the Word pierces his soul, and he is converted.

I remember quite well, and the subject of the story is most probably present in this congregation, that a very singular conversion was wrought at New Park Street Chapel. A man, who had been accustomed to go to a gin palace to fetch in gin for his Sunday evening's drinking, saw a crowd round the door of the chapel, he looked in, and forced his way to the top of the gallery stairs. Just then, I looked in the direction in which he stood—I do not know why I did so, but I remarked that there might be a man in the gallery who had come in there with no very good motive, for even then he had a gin bottle in his pocket. The singularity of the expression struck the man, and being startled because the preacher so exactly described him, he listened attentively to the warnings which followed, the Word reached his heart, the grace of God met with him, he became converted, and today he is walking humbly in the fear of God.

These cases are not at all uncommon. They were not unusual in the days of Whitefield and Wesley. They tell us, in their journals, of persons who came with stones in their pockets to throw at the Methodists, but whose enmity was slain by a stone from the sling of the Son of David. Others came to create disturbances, but a disturbance was created in their hearts which could never be quelled till they

came to Jesus Christ, and found peace in Him. The history of the church of God is studded with the remarkable conversions of persons who did not wish to be converted, were not looking for grace, and were even opposed to it, and yet, by the interposing arm of eternal mercy, were struck down, and transformed into earnest and devoted followers of the Lamb.

**III.** That fact being established, we may now range our thoughts around the question, WHAT SHALL WE SAY ABOUT IT?

What shall we say about these acts of sovereign preventing grace? Why, first, we will say, *behold the freeness of the grace of God*. It is like the dew that comes on the earth, which stays not for man, neither waits for the sons of men. It is like the sunbeam shining into the hovel, and finding its way through grimy windowpanes, more calculated to shut it out than to admit it. It is like the wind which whistles among the cordage, whether the mariners desire it or no.

God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, not because of any goodness in the sinner, or because of any preparedness in the creature, but simply because He wills it, He visits men with salvation. He is so able to work salvation that He waits not for any contributory arm, but when the creature is most dead, and most corrupt, then comes in the quickening grace of God, and gets to itself all the glory of salvation.

If every convert were brought in through the usual means of grace, we should come to regard conversion as a necessary result from certain fixed causes, and attribute some mystic virtue to the outward means, but when God is pleased to distribute the blessing entirely apart from these, then He shows that He can do without means as well as with means, that nothing is too mighty a work for Him, that His arm is not shortened at all, so that He needs to use an instrument to make up the length of it, neither has He lost any strength, so as to be forced to appeal to us to make up the deficiency.

If it were God's will, He could, by a word, convert a nation. If so He chose, He is such a Master of human hearts that, as readily as the corn waves in the breath of the summer's wind, so could He make all hearts bow before the mysterious impulses of His Holy Spirit. Why He does it not, we know not, that is among His secrets, but when He works in a marked and decided way beyond all expectation, He does but give us a proof of how He is able to work as He wills amongst the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world.

Oh, the richness, the freeness, the power of the grace of God—the richness of it, that it comes to those who sought it not; the freeness of it, that it waits not for preparation on man's part; the power of it, that it makes the unwilling willing when the appointed hour has come! Brethren, let us join together heartily in adoring this grace of God, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in as many as it pleases the Lord our God to call.

What shall we say further about this? We will gather this consoling inference from it, *if the Lord is thus found of those that seek Him not, how much more surely will He be found of those who seek Him!* If He has been known to give sight to those who did not ask it, how much more will He bestow it upon those who cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" If he saved Saul who hated Him, much more will He listen to him that cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner." If He called careless, curious Zacchaeus, much more will He speak to you, my anxious, earnest hearer, who are saying, "Oh that He would speak to me!" If a man opens his door, and voluntarily calls to a passing beggar, and says, "Here, poor man, here is relief for you," why, then, the man who begs importunately will not be sent away unhelped—will he?

If I were in the case of the seeker, I should be mightily encouraged by the subject before us. I would say, "Does Jesus thus call those who were not hungering and thirsting, and does He bring them to the Gospel feast? Then, when I, a poor hungry thirsty sinner, come wringing my hands, and saying, 'Oh, that He would give me to drink of the water of life, oh, that He would let me feed on the blessings of His grace,' surely He will receive me." Be cheered, ye humble penitents, the Lord's heart is too large to permit Him to send you away empty. Be encouraged, at this moment, to breathe the silent prayer, "O God, the Lord and Giver of grace, give Thy grace to us who seek it now!"

Why, dear heart, you have grace already, or you would not seek it, for grace must first come to you to make you seek grace. Be thankful, for salvation has come to your house. Dead men do not long for life. In the marble limbs of the corpse, there is no struggling after life, no pangs of desire for health. God has looked on you in love, look you to Jesus, and live.

What else shall we say about this doctrine? There is one other thing we will say about it—from *this time forward we will never despair of anybody*. If the Lord Jesus Christ called Saul of Tarsus when he was foaming at the mouth with wrath, there are none among the wicked who are beyond the reach of hopeful prayer. Your boy breaks your heart, dear Mother. You have wept over him many tears. He is far away now, and the last you heard of him wounded your soul, and unbelief said, “Do not pray for him again.” Ah! That is the devil’s counsel, He is no good messenger who bids a mother cease praying for her child while that child is out of hell, have faith in the divine power, and pray for your boy. Who knows what the Lord may yet make of him?

There is one living in your parish, a swearer, and everything that is bad. You did once think of asking him to come and hear the Gospel, but you said, “It is of no use, he will be sure to turn it into ridicule.” How do you know? It is the very boast of grace that it shines into the unlikeliest hearts. God’s electing love has, in many cases, selected great fools, and great sinners, at least, I know that God’s people think themselves such. I have said, never despair of your child, and I will put it to you again—if you have friends who are infidel, or persecuting, or profane, yet, as long as you live and they live, it is your business to labor for their conversion, and to weep and pray for them.

O brethren, if the lives of some of us before conversion had been known, good men might have denied the possibility of our salvation. If all the secrets of our hearts had been written, some would have said, “This is a hopeless case.” But mercy saved *us*, and therefore it can save anybody. Never say of any place, “It is such a den of iniquity I can do no good there.” Never say, “That workshop is so profane I could not speak of religion there.” Oh! you do not know—you do not know! With God at your back, if it were possible to save the damned in hell, you might go and preach there, and win trophies for Christ. Never think any too bad or too vile, but labor on still, for God can work wonders in every case.

**IV.** We will close when we have noticed, with great brevity, WHAT WE OUGHT NOT TO SAY ABOUT THESE THINGS.

We have told you what we should say about these remarkable conversions—we should behold the freeness and sovereignty of the grace of God, we should be encouraged to seek it for ourselves, and we should hope for the conversion of others. But now, what ought we not to say? One thing we ought not to say is this—“*Then I shall sit still, and perhaps the grace of God will come to me*, I shall not seek, nor pray, nor desire, for if I am quite unconcerned, grace may yet visit me.”

Now, my dear hearer, if you make such an excuse as that for your spiritual indolence, you will find the covering too thin to conceal your nakedness. You know better. A man suddenly stumbles upon wealth, by a windfall or a speculation. Do you therefore say, “I shall not keep my shop open, I shall leave business, I shall not go to work again, for Robinson has found a thousand pounds, I shall stay at home, and perhaps I shall do the same”? No, you know that all the examples in the world of sudden wealth only go to prove the rule that he who would gain riches must find them in the appointed way. So, all the examples of these remarkable interpositions of God only go to prove the rule that he who would have mercy must seek it. “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found,” is the fixed rule, and though God comes to some who seek Him not, yet the rule still holds good.

Do you not know that all the while you remain impenitent your soul is under condemnation? Some men have run this awful risk, and yet have escaped, is that any reason why you should? I have heard of a man who took poison, but so rapid was the action of a surgeon in the neighborhood that, by means of a stomach pump, the man’s life was preserved, is that a reason why you too should swallow poison? Because providence has preserved some while they were running on in sin, is that a reason why you should continue to rebel against God?

I have heard a story of an English sailor in a foreign port, when the foreigners were manning the yards, and performing their maneuvers in honor of a royal personage, our countryman, in order to show what an Englishman could do, climbed to the top of the mast and stood there on his head. On a sudden, the ship lurched, and he fell, but by a happy providence, he caught a rope as he fell, and descended safely to the deck. "There," said he, "you fellows, see if you could tumble down like that." Are you surprised that no one accepted the challenge? Who but a fool would have thought it worth his while to imitate the example?

Because here and there a man, who runs solemn risks, is by the interposition of divine grace saved from the consequences of his folly, is that a reason why you should run those hazards yourselves? God does thus interpose, nobody can doubt it, but still, His sovereign rule is, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found," and His Gospel cries daily, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Trust the merits of Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, for our Gospel is not, "Sit still, and wait for divine interpositions," but "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Moreover, we should never say, "*Why use means for saving others? God can do His own work.*" Brethren, a man is always in a vicious state of heart when he speaks so. He knows he talks nonsense, and he only does so as an excuse for his indolence, and to quiet his conscience. We are to labor to win souls, for men are brought to God by instrumentality. Where God has appeared to save without any means, if you could have the whole matter before you, you would find that means were used.

For instance, take Saul's conversion. You will ask, "What means were used in his case?" We do not know, but possibly the dying martyr Stephen, when he prayed for his enemies, may have been the secondary cause of the young man's call by grace. At any rate, he was included in Stephen's intercession, and that prayer went up to God for Saul, and was prevalent with heaven. And then, look again, after Saul had been arrested from above, Ananias must come in to open his eyes, so that, even in that case, there was the instrumentality of prayer before, and the instrumentality of instruction afterwards.

So it may be with many an one who has been suddenly converted. There was a mother, perhaps, in heaven, who had prayed for the man forty years before, for prayer will keep, and be fragrant many a year. And let me say that, if neither father nor mother ever prayed for that conversion, perhaps a grandfather did, for prayer has power for hundreds of years, and a great-grandfather's prayers may be the instrumentality of the conversion of his great-grandchildren. There is no end to the efficacy of prayer.

Good Dr. Rippon used often, in the pulpit, to pour out his soul in prayer that God would bless the church of which he was the pastor, and the members at the Tabernacle have been the inheritors of the blessings brought down by his intercession. Pray on, then. Your prayers may not be answered for the next five centuries, those prayers of yours may be lying by till Christ comes, but they will avail in some way.

So that, you see, when we think there is no instrumentality, there really is an instrumentality, if we could but see it. These remarkable cases must never be used as a reason why we are not to do all that we can to bring sinners to Christ. God's work, in such instances, instead of discouraging us, should stimulate action on our part. Because God works, are we to be still? Nay, but because God works, let us be workers together with Him, that, through us, directly or indirectly, His purposes may be fulfilled.

Suppose, now, it were known that the events of a certain battle would depend entirely on the skill of the general. The two armies are equally balanced, and everything must depend upon the tact of the commander, would the soldiers therefore conclude that they needed not to load, or fire, or draw a sword, because everything depended on the commander? No, but the commander works, and his soldiers work together with him. So is it with us. Everything depends on God, but we are His instruments. We are His servants, and because He is at our back, let us go forward with courage and zeal. The results are certain, God being our Helper.



I charge you, my brethren and sisters, to take heart from the fact that God works great wonders. Go to your classes, or wherever else you may be laboring, singing cheerfully the song of hope, and offering the prayer of full assurance. When we feel that we must have souls saved, souls will be saved. For my part, I cannot be happy unless sinners are led to Jesus. We must have it, the Holy Ghost will not let us rest without it, we shall have it, and God shall have the praise. Amen.

## EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

### *1 SAMUEL 9:1-25, 10:1-8*

**1 Samuel Chapter 9. Verses 1-2.** *Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.*

Here we have the pedigree of the first king of Israel, Saul, the son of Kish. He was descended from a noble tribe, though not a very large one, and he appears to have been endowed with a very notable personal appearance, "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people," And to the Israelites of that day, who had got away from looking up to God, and to the more valuable accomplishments of the mind and the heart, the striking personal appearance of Saul would be a great attraction and recommendation.

**3-4.** *And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.*

He was diligent in his father's service, even though that service meant a fruitless journey in search of some straying asses. As he was thus faithfully discharging the duties of his station in life, he was the man who was likely to rise to some higher position. He was the son of "a mighty man of power" or substance, and yet so simple were the manners of the time that he was sent, with one of the servants, to look for the lost donkeys, and he appears to have started at once to carry out the commission which had been entrusted to him. Learn from Saul's obedience, dear young people, to never despise any duty which falls to your lot in the ordinary avocations of daily life, you will be preparing yourselves for some higher position by doing well what you are called to do now.

**5.** *And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.*

There was evidently in Saul, at that time, a great considerateness of spirit, he wished to save his father from having any painful anxiety concerning his son and his servant, for Saul put both together when he said "us." It is most desirable that young men, in the present day, should have a tender regard for those to whom they owe their being, and who have done so much for them in the years of their tender infancy, and that all young people should be careful never needlessly to give their parents one anxious thought on their account.

**6.** *And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.*

In this case, as in so many others, the servant seems to have had more grace than his young master had, for the name of Samuel the prophet was not unknown to him, and he knew where the "man of God" lived, and told Saul a good deal about him, and gave him some good advice as to what they should do. In any case where the servant, and not the master, knows the Lord, it is well, when occasion offers, and

it can be done prudently and discreetly, for the servant to speak up, and give a good word for the cause of God and truth.

*7. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?*

He says nothing about any money that he may have had in his own pocket, and again his servant has to lead the way.

*8-9. And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer).*

He was a man who looked further ahead than others could, for, under divine inspiration, he could see into the futurity.

*10. Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go.*

Saul was willing to be liberal at his servant's expense, and to let him give "the fourth part of a shekel of silver" to the prophet for him; and we have known some other folk who have been very generous in giving away the money of other people rather than their own.

*10-12. So they went unto the city where the man of God was. And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:*

These young maidens were evidently well informed, they knew where the man of God was, they knew what he was going to do, and they knew the time of the sacrifice or feast. Let us hope that they not only knew all this, but that they entered into the true spirit of it.

*13-19. As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him. And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.*

*Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer:*

Saul evidently did not know Samuel, and it appears from this fact that he was not a gracious, religious man. He had the charm of a fine outward appearance, and he probably had many of the domestic virtues, but he was not one who lived in the fear of God.

*19-21. Go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them: for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?*

There was a very becoming modesty about him, he was really surprised and startled that such an honor should be in store for him, he had many natural virtues, but alas! the grace of God was not upon him.

*22-24. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said*



*unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul.*

The right shoulder of the animal that was offered in sacrifice was part of the priest's portion, and this shoulder Samuel now ordered the cook to set before Saul as he sat in the place of honor.

**24-25.** *And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.*

For quietness and seclusion, Samuel took the young man upstairs to the flat roof of the house, and they walked to and fro, in the cool of the evening, talking about the high destiny to which Saul was called, and Samuel doubtless giving him valuable instructions concerning his new and important duties.

**26-27. 1 Samuel Chapter 10. Verses 1-2.** *And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God. [See sermon #1547, Samuel and the Young Man Saul]. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to day,—*

He gave Saul some signs by which he could confirm the truth of all that he had spoken to him, "When thou art departed from me to day,"—

**2.** *Then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah;*

It was well for Samuel to send Saul, with brilliant prospects opening before him, to the sepulchre of the mother of his tribe. Oh, that we were all wise enough to think often of our last hours! Communion with the grave might even help us to communion with heaven. Samuel said to Saul, "Thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre,"—

**2-3.** *And they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:*

Going to offer to God a meat offering and a thank offering. How could Samuel have known all this if God had not anointed his eyes, and made him a seer who could see what others saw not?

**4.** *And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.*

"Thou shalt take from them thy first tribute as a king. They shall give thee two loaves of bread, to teach thee to avoid all luxury, and not to be a king who delighteth in delicate and dainty fare. Thou shalt fare as the people do."

**5-6.** *After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them,—*

"Thou shalt speak with enthusiasm about God; moved with a holy passion, thou shalt speak like a man inspired."

**6.** *And shalt be turned into another man.*

Note that Samuel did not say to Saul, "Thou shalt be turned into a new man," for that is what he never was. He became, for a while, another man, a different man from what he had been before, but he never became a gracious man.

**7-8.** *And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee. And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.*

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